



Chief of Learning, Engagement, and Research
Hammer Museum at UCLA
Los Angeles, California

THE SEARCH

The Hammer Museum at UCLA seeks a visionary leader to establish a multidisciplinary platform that advances its public programs, community partnerships, and academic initiatives. This role will be instrumental in deepening the museum’s educational mission and expanding audience engagement across all ages, while fostering research onsite, online, and offsite.

Rooted in the belief that art and ideas have the power to illuminate our lives and build a more just world, the Hammer champions artists who challenge us to see differently, imagine boldly, and engage deeply. The museum recognizes that art not only offers aesthetic experiences but also provides profound insight into the cultural, political, and social issues of our time. Through dynamic exhibitions and programs—including lectures, symposia, film series, readings, and musical performances—the Hammer serves as a vibrant intellectual and creative nexus.

The successful candidate will ensure that all initiatives align with institutional capacity, remain financially sustainable, and support the Hammer’s strategic priorities. Their approach should empower staff, enrich the museum’s role as a hub for learning and research, and strengthen its artist-centered mission. They will cultivate meaningful connections between audiences and artists, elevate the Hammer’s civic presence, and enhance its impact locally, nationally, and internationally—especially in contributing to the cultural life of Los Angeles and reinforcing its core relationship with the University of California, Los Angeles.

The Hammer has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in identifying its next Chief of Learning, Engagement, and Research. Applications, nominations, and inquiries should be directed as outlined at the end of this description.

THE HAMMER MUSEUM

As one of the three public arts institutions of the [School of the Arts and Architecture at UCLA](#), The Hammer Museum is dedicated to championing artists and artwork that provoke new ways of seeing, spark imagination, and inspire social change. Through its bold exhibitions and thought-provoking programs, the museum creates opportunities for meaningful engagement with the most urgent cultural, political, and social issues of our time.

Established in 1990 by Dr. Armand Hammer to house his collection of European and 19th-century art, the museum entered a pivotal partnership with UCLA in 1994. This collaboration broadened its scope to include the Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts and stewardship of the Franklin D. Murphy Sculpture Garden. In 2018, the Hammer announced a \$180 million capital campaign to support an ambitious transformation plan for the museum's spaces. The funds have been used to expand exhibition and public areas, and to increase the museum's endowment. As a result of the campaign, the Hammer has significantly increased gallery space by adding 20,000 square feet of public space for programs, a works on paper study room, art storage, administrative offices, as well as the celebrated Alice Waters restaurant *Lulu*.

Situated in the heart of Los Angeles—one of the world's most vibrant and culturally diverse cities—the Hammer Museum plays a pivotal role in the region's creative ecosystem. Renowned for its commitment to free admission and inclusive programming, the Hammer serves as a dynamic platform for dialogue, experimentation, and community engagement. Among its most celebrated initiatives is [the *Made in L.A.* biennial](#), inaugurated in 2012 as the city's first exhibition of its kind. Now in its seventh iteration, the biennial highlights emerging and under-recognized artists working across a wide range of media, reflecting the city's distinctive, decentralized artistic landscape. Complementing this are the [Hammer Projects Series](#) and an ambitious slate of over 300 annual public programs—including lectures, symposia, film screenings, readings, and performances—that foster critical conversations and cultural exchange across disciplines such as art, politics, history, activism, the environment, music, and film.

The Hammer possesses world-class art holdings, including the growing Hammer Contemporary Collection, currently over 3,000 objects in all media, with a focus on works on paper and works by Southern California artists. Another ever-increasing collection is the UCLA Grunwald Center for the Graphic Arts, which has over 45,000 works on paper from the Renaissance to the present. The Hammer also has permanent collection galleries devoted to the Armand Hammer Collection and oversees the Murphy Sculpture Garden on the UCLA campus. The Hammer has 105 full-time staff and approximately 150 student employees, most of whom attend UCLA. The Hammer's staff is lean, highly capable, and indispensable to its mission.

Visit the [Hammer's website](#) to learn more.

THE ROLE

The Hammer Museum at UCLA seeks a visionary leader to shape and elevate its Learning, Engagement, and Research (LER) initiatives. This role will set the strategic vision, design innovative programming, and develop a dynamic hub that fosters intellectual and creative exploration. By integrating LER across the museum's physical spaces, digital platforms, and external partnerships, this leader will position learning as a central pillar of the Hammer's mission, enhancing its impact and visibility within the cultural and academic landscape.

Reporting to the Hammer's Director, the Chief of LER will be responsible for unifying existing teams and leveraging institutional expertise with the support of the Director of Public Programs and Associate Director of Academic Programs within a new collaborative hub for LER at the Hammer. In concert with the Hammer's Director, the incumbent will work to align the department with the mission of the Hammer and cultivate meaningful connections between audiences, artists, and ideas. The Chief of LER will develop collaborative working methods internally and externally to ensure mission alignment, manage the scope of work, financial sustainability, and effective, efficient, streamlined working methods. This includes collaborating with staff to assess and mitigate risks related to brand reputation, legal considerations, security, and insurance, and developing proactive solutions that align with the museum's mission and operational needs. Through this work, they will help deepen the Hammer's connection to UCLA and contribute to the broader cultural landscape of Los Angeles.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The successful candidate will have strong relationships in the field, a solid working knowledge of best practices, and strength in building relationships and partnerships with arts leaders and organizations, establishing the Hammer as a committed resource for local audiences. They will have the ability to put a plan in place for data collection and benchmarking performance of programs to drive good decision-making and to clarify what makes Hammer's program unique and successful. They are expected to balance the creative and intellectual process of developing initiatives and partnerships with duties associated with administrative and financial oversight and planning.

The Hammer is about to begin work on creating its next strategic plan. The Chief of LER will be a central part of this process, working in partnership with the Director and the core executive leadership team to develop and implement a plan that will write the next chapter in the Hammer's history.

The Chief of LER is also expected to address the following:

COMMUNICATION AND INTERPRETATION

- In collaboration with the Hammer's Communications team, the Chief of LER will develop a vision and strategy for communicating, promoting, and making LER's program and impact visible.
- Develop interpretive guidelines and establish an implementation process in collaboration with key teams, including Curatorial, ensuring all written materials align with the Hammer's commitment to knowledge-building and accessibility.

LEARNING

- In collaboration with the Director and the core executive leadership team, further the Hammer's mission and focus on access to the arts.
- Strengthen the museum's commitment to learning through art and ideas.
- Create an environment for learning and engagement at the Hammer that supports core programs and makes visible institutional priorities.
- Deepen support and expand visibility for the Hammer's core partnerships, programs, and curriculum development with schools, universities, and arts organizations in Los Angeles and throughout the region.

RESEARCH

- Establish and lead artist-centered research initiatives in collaboration with internal teams and external partners.
- Support, expand, and elevate existing scholarship, positioning the Hammer as a thought leader in art history and related fields.
- Strengthen the museum's role as a hub for critical discourse and knowledge production.
- Work in concert with the Hammer's Director and across teams, including Curatorial and Communications, to set a vision for and implement a plan for the Hammer's digital archives, including collections, exhibitions, and programs.
- Deepen online engagement with scholars and the general interest audiences.

FUNDRAISING

- Develop a vision and strategy for fundraising for LER in collaboration with the Development team.
- Cultivate relationships to ensure long-term sustainability for LER programs, while ensuring visibility and accessibility of the department's work across various platforms.

OUTREACH/ PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Participate in scholarly symposia, conferences, and programs at other museums and universities. Present lectures and oversee/conduct tours for individuals and groups on and off-campus.
- Develop and cultivate relations with other museums and professional organizations. Represent the museum to outside organizations such as the College Art Association, AAMC, and other scholarly and museum organizations.
- All other outreach/professional activities duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The ideal candidate will be rigorous, curious, and multifaceted in their communication and engagement, able to engender trust and inspire potential in our communities locally and globally. The Hammer seeks someone who is creative and strategic in their approach, can work collaboratively, is a good mentor, and believes passionately in the critical role that the arts play in the cultural life of our city.

The Chief of LER will be energized to create inspiring encounters with art and a space for courageous conversations on art and society that are catalysts for how we see ourselves, the world, and its possibilities. They will be adept at piloting experimental programs, testing out ideas, and invested in innovation as a critical component of an evolving arts organization.

A crucial component of the position is working alongside the Hammer's Director to determine a strategic vision for partnerships, programs, and curricula with students and faculty that take advantage of the Hammer's location within the University of California, Los Angeles, furthering the museum's research mission.

They will be expected to meet many of the qualifications and characteristics listed below:

- A deep understanding of and passion for the Hammer's mission and belief in art, ideas, creativity, and knowledge-building as a powerful engine for positive social change.
- Experience supporting and fostering a variety of voices, perspectives, and ideas through projects and initiatives that align with the mission of the museum
- The successful candidate will be forward-thinking and an articulate advocate who values differences in public exchange and can mobilize support for divergent ideas.
- Prior experience with an educational, arts, or cultural organization is preferred or equivalent creative development and implementation of audience engagement strategies and programs.
- Experience and interest in developing digital audience engagement.
- Knowledge of contemporary art, both emerging and established artists, writers, public intellectuals, and other key voices in contemporary art, politics, and culture.
- Knowledge of scholarship related to art education and museum practices.

- Strength in collaborating with artists and colleagues within and outside of institutions and across an academic landscape and the city to build partnerships that will expand the Hammer’s impact and increase audience engagement.
- Ability to develop meaningful and sustainable programming initiatives that take into account audience needs and institutional capacities.
- Strong leadership skills with experience building, managing, and mentoring teams, and the ability to support a dynamic and inclusive institutional culture.
- Strong project management skills across program planning, administration, and implementation, and demonstrated ability to strategically deploy limited resources for the greatest impact.
- A bachelor's degree or master’s degree is preferred, or an equivalent combination of education and experience is needed.
- Ability to work evening hours for events and some weekends required.
- Excellent writing, public speaking, research, and interpersonal skills.

COMPENSATION AND LOCATION

The posted salary for this position is \$180,000 – \$200,000 and is commensurate with experience.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website: <https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/hammer-museum/chief-learning-engagement-and-research>. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

Sarah James, Courtney Wilk-Mandel, Aku Ammah-Tagoe, and Cara Meyers
Isaacson, Miller

The University of California is an Equal Opportunity Employer advancing inclusive excellence. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, age, protected veteran status, or other protected categories covered by the UC nondiscrimination policy:

<https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4000376/DiscHarassAffirmAction>